GEKKAN ACTION

# 私の少年

わたしのしょうねん

1

高野ひと深

双葉社

# 私の少年

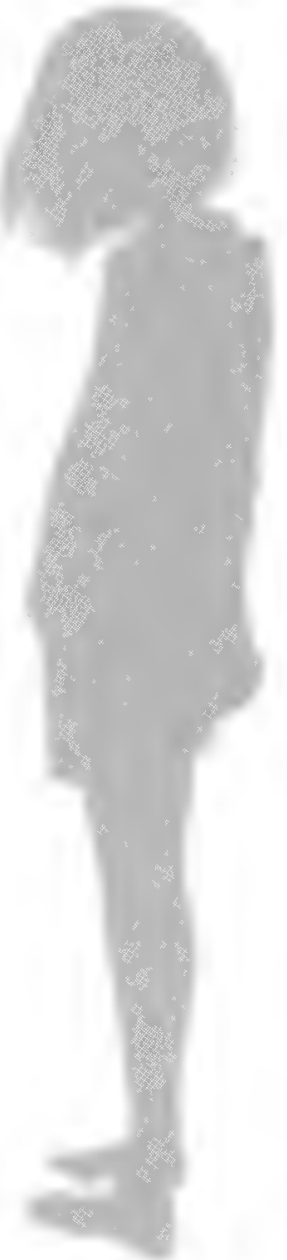
わたしのしょうねん

1

高野ひと深

ACTION COMICS

by Hitomi Takano



# contents

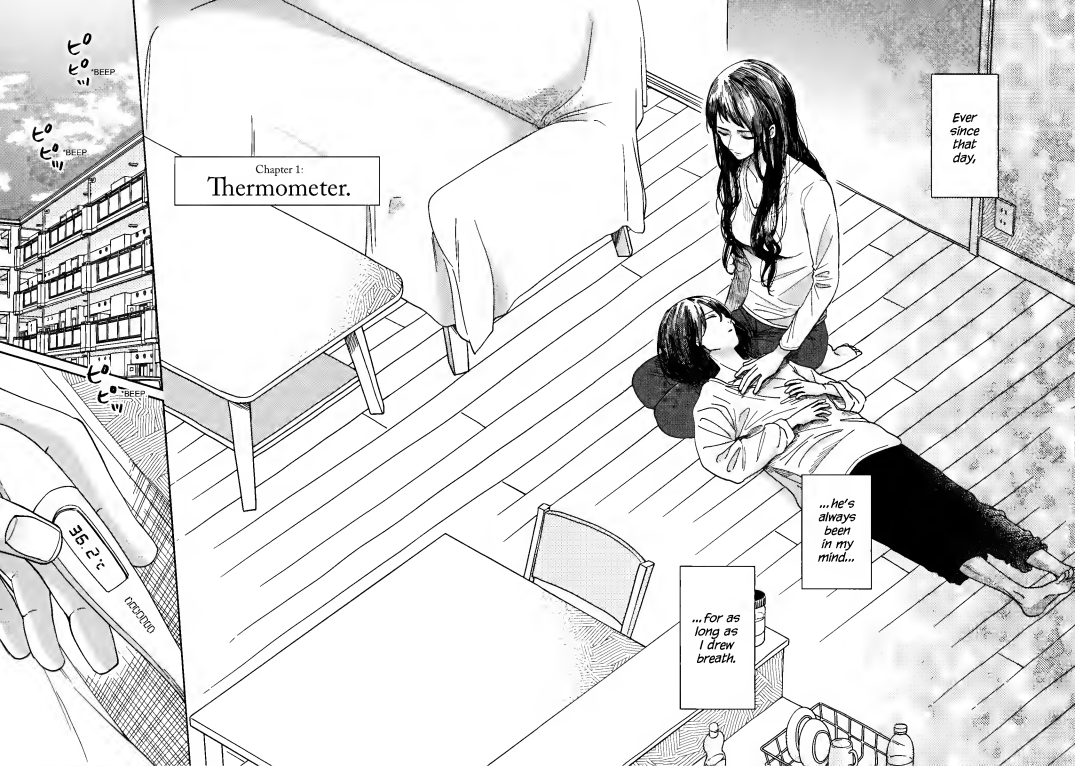

Chapter 1: Thermometer. 005

Chapter 2: Overdrive. 059

Chapter 3: Rabbits. 091

Chapter 4: A Present. 123

There is a beautiful boy resting on my lap.


ピピピ BEEP
ピピピ BEEP
ピピピ BEEP
Chapter 1:
Thermometer.
36.2℃
Ever since that day,
...he's always been in my mind...
...for as long as I drew breath.

My mornings begin with the sound of a beeping thermo-meter.
Tawada Satoko.
I'm turning 30 this year.
It's been this way for about eight years.
I know it's meaning-less,
...yet somehow I made a habit out of it.
...and touched in their nether regions--
*SSSK
Prefectural Police CID Section I and A-Station... ...have discovered obscene cases where little girls were kidnapped..
*SFX SPLASH
But I keep using it regard-less.
And now for the news.
I don't use it to check my health.

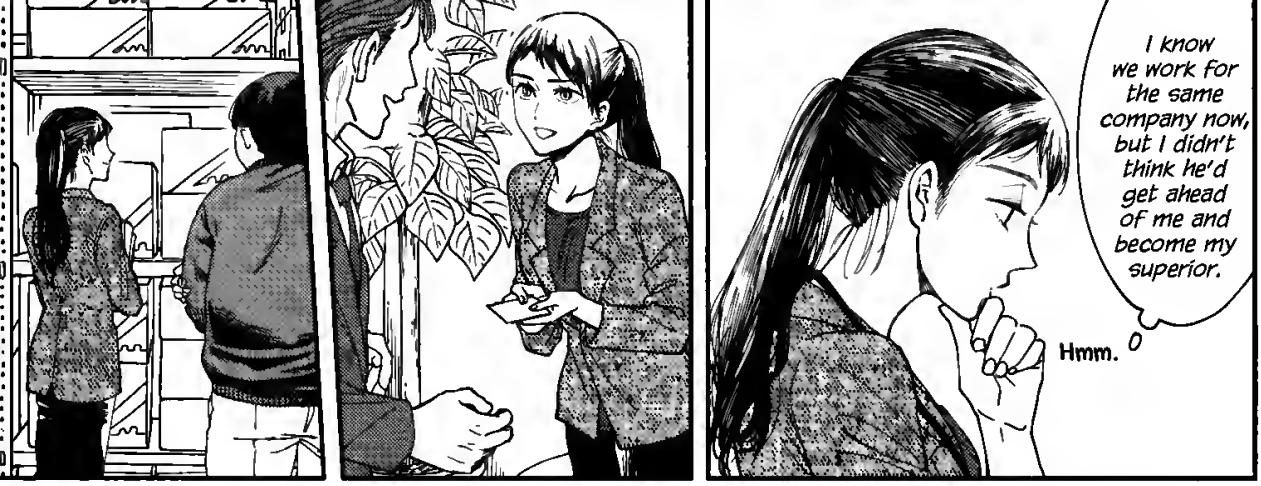
*TMP
*TMP
*TMP
*TMP
BUS STOP
*VROOM
*BOOT
Oh!
*TMP
*TMP
*BOOT
*BOOT
*BOOT
Is that kid...
...in elementary school...? She's been practicing a lot lately...
*BOOT
Aww
no no...
*TUMBLE
She's not getting any better.

*CREEP
Huh?
Good morning.
'Morning.
Tawada-san, Chief Shiikawa was looking for you.
Satoko!
*SMILE

Shiikawa-san.
Do you need something?
I do, actually.
You're fast on the uptake.
The manager messaged us...
...in the group chat, but you're the only one who never replied, so I was worried.
Ohh.
Sorry, I was really busy yesterday so I never bothered to check...

Yeah, so, Satoko.
From now on, make sure you're ready for the manager's messages!
By the way, could you not call me by my first name all natural-like.
What? But it's your name.
Uh...
Yeah, it is.
Okay...
...We're not dating.
I know ♥ You always say that ♥
But I still think you'd make a good couple.
Ahaha.
Well...

We used to date.
Back in my college years, I joined the futsal club and went to a training camp during the summer.
Shiikawa and I happened to be on the same team.
But our relationship only lasted one year.
Let's break up.
I wasn't bothered by it, though.
I'm not in denial.
I don't think I was ever serious about him.
I don't regret breaking up with him.


I know we work for the same company now, but I didn't think he'd get ahead of me and become my superior.
Hmm.

There's no work tomorrow, so why don't we go out to drink?
What?

Time to leave.
Satoko, Satoko!
...

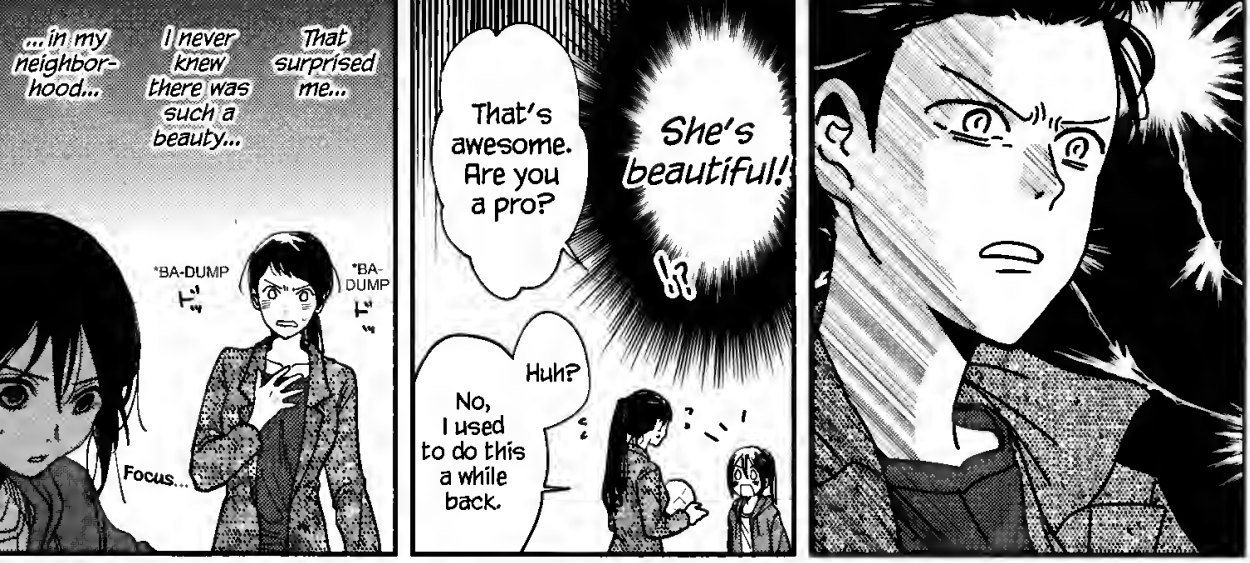
See you.
Yeah, see you.

Oh, hey, come on.
Sorry, I'm just so tired today.
See you.

Aw, what? Why're you acting so cold to me?
No thanks.

Ayumi Park
*SHAK
*SHAK
Have a nice day!
*SHH
*KS
*SFX
AHHHH
*GLUG
*GLUG
*GLUG

A soccer ball
Sorry!
Hm?
*TAP
...Ah...
Just for today, I'm not gonna give a fuck about what happens in this world...
It's her...
Oh.
*TMP
*TMP
Look.
In an instep drive, you're supposed to kick the middle of the ball.
Wow the ball's barely inflated
*BOOT
See how it goes up?
But if you're having trouble, then you need to start by dropping it with your hands--
...
BEER
Hup!
*SFX SWOOIIP


...in my neighbor-hood...
I never knew there was such a beauty...
That surprised me...
*BA-DUMP
*BA-DUMP
Focus...
That's awesome. Are you a pro?
She's beautiful!
!?
Huh?
No, I used to do this a while back.

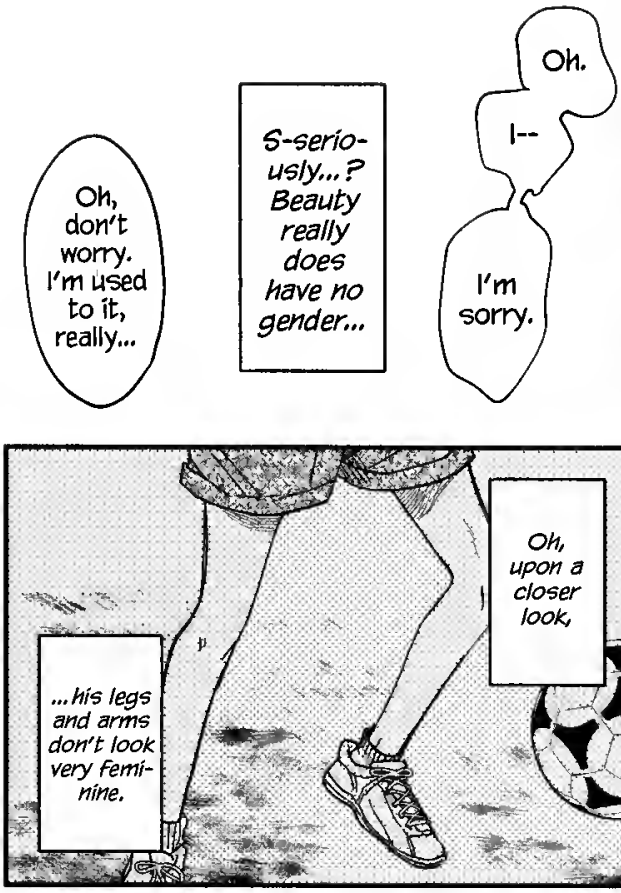
Ooh.
Oh.
Oh, when the ball's in the air, you need to adjust your foot.

*SFX: BOOT

*WHAM
Is it for girls' soccer?

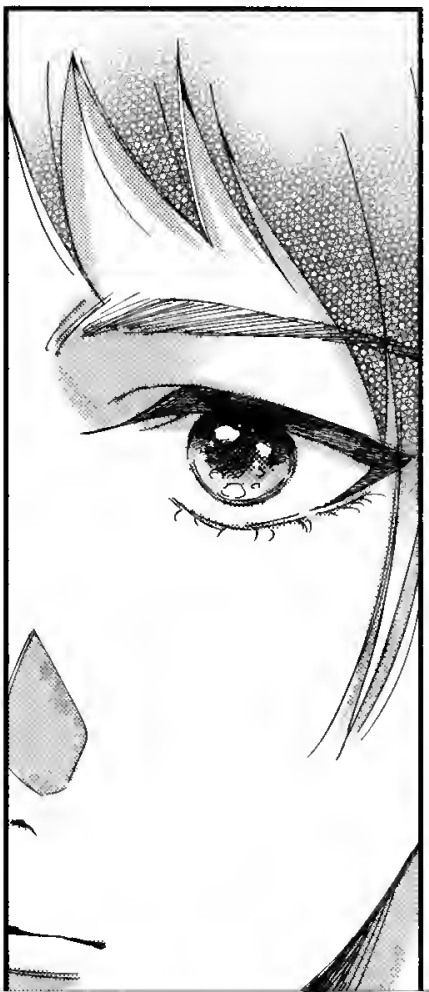
...You were practicing this morning, right?
*BFF

I got a test in soccer camp to see who'll be in the first string.
Yeah.

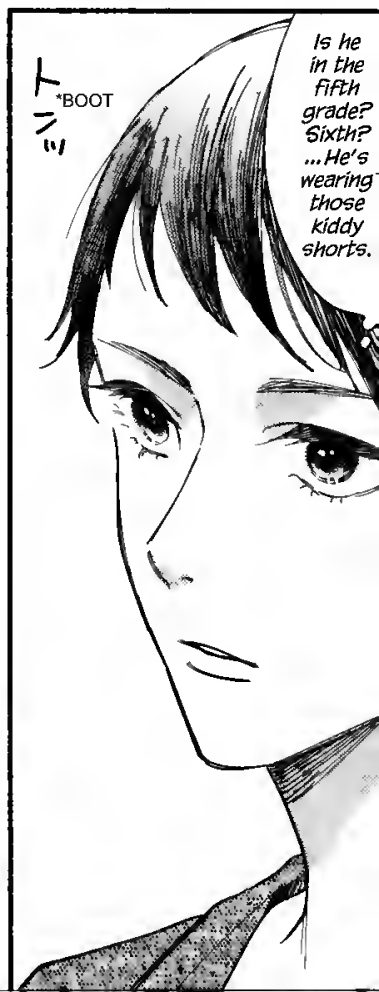

Oh.
I--
I'm sorry.
S-seriously...? Beauty really does have no gender...
Oh, don't worry. I'm used to it, really...

Huh?
I'm a boy.

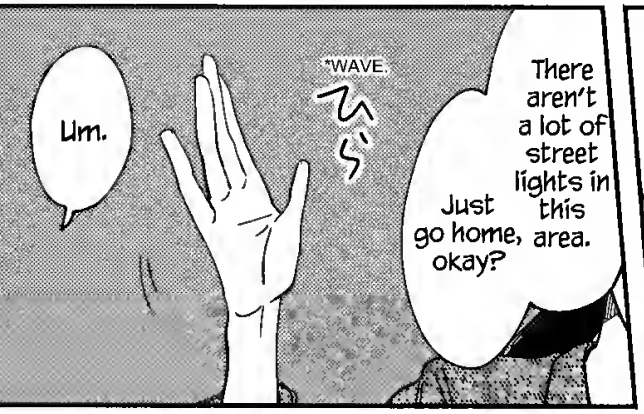

Oh, upon a closer look,
...his legs and arms don't look very feminine.

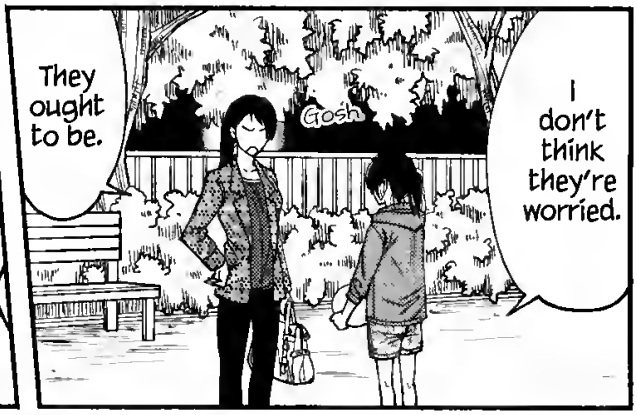


トン
*BOOT


トン
*BOOT
Is he in the fifth grade? Sixth? ...He's wearing those kiddy shorts.

Gasp
Hey.
It's late. You'll make your parents worry.


Um.
*WAVE.
Just go home, okay?
There aren't a lot of street lights in this area.


They ought to be.
Gosh
I don't think they're worried.

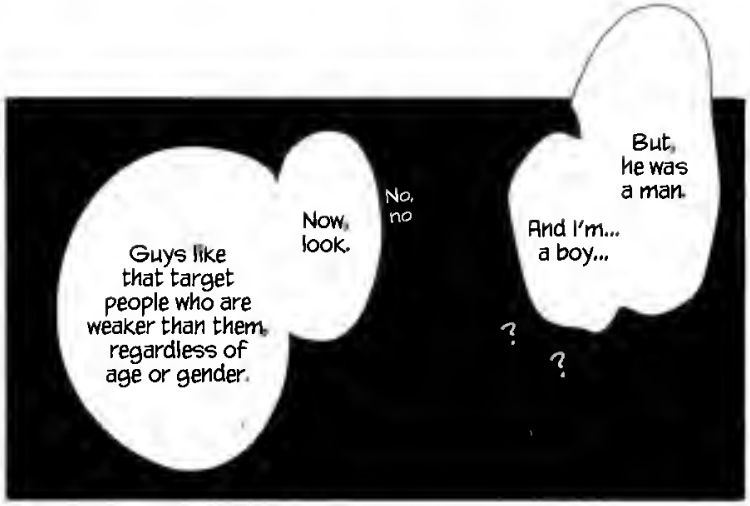
You take care, Onee-san.
Th-
Thanks.

*BEEP
*STARE
*BEEP
*BEEP
Damn, that's pretty close by.
It sure is dangerous outside...
Last night, a little girl fell victim to an act of obscenity
The criminal was arrested in ***** City
I woke up early on a holiday...
*WHISHHH
Gonna rest for a bit...
*BAF
*FFFFF

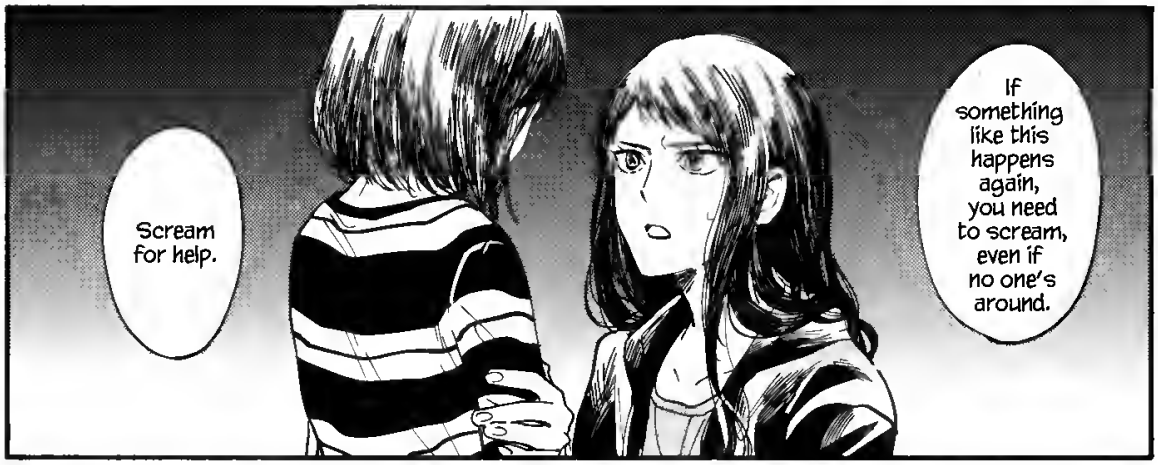
Gasp.
*BLINK
ぱ
ち
とっぷり
*SUNSET
So much for shopping today.
Huh?
Wow, that was a long nap.
Guess I'll drink the beer I bought yesterday...
*EMPTY
Huh?!
No way!
Oh.
*SFX: PLOD PLOD
Wonder if it's still there...
とぼ
とぼ
It wouldn't hurt to check...
I wonder if he's there.

y-
Yuu-kun, let's go home!
*BA-DUMP

*SFX DASH
だっ
Oh.
The hell's Yuu-kun?
*DASH
だっ
You okay?
Did he...
...grab your arm?
Huh?
Yeah.
Did he touch you in any weird places?
No...
*GRAB
がしっ
Thank good-ness...
*GRIP
ぎゅ…


Guys like that target people who are weaker than them, regardless of age or gender.
Now, look.
No, no
But, he was a man.
And I'm... a boy...
? ?

He said that he wasn't feeling...
...good.
Sigh
He sure ran fast for someone who wasn't feeling good.


Scream for help.
If something like this happens again, you need to scream, even if no one's around.

Yeah.
Got it?

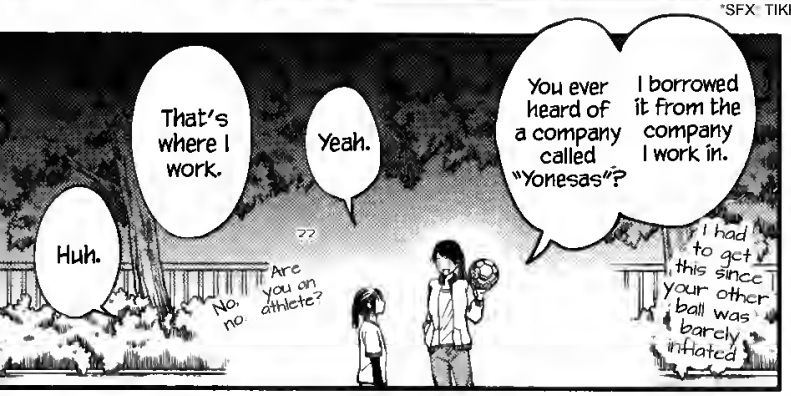
BUT
!?
But...

Now go home.
And you shouldn't be practicing here when it's nighttime, okay?
*PAT
ぽん
*PAT
ぽん

I can't practice in my house.
And the test is next Friday...
?
...Geez...
...What's your name?
Mashuu... Hayami Mashuu. I'm 12 years old...
TWELVE...
Okay
My name is Satoko Tawada Satoko.
And I'm... old. Let's leave it at that. It's a pleasure.

Starting tomorrow, ...you should only practice when I'm with you.
Eh?!
We'll meet every night at 19:00 at the train station.
Make sure you're somewhere bright.
I'll teach you the ropes.
I'll make sure you get juggling down by the end of next week.
Yay!!
Yay!
Ah, really?
Thank you so much!
Wow!

*SFX: TIKKA TIKKA TIKKA TIKKA TIKKA TIKKA


Huh.
That's where I work.
Yeah.
??
Are you an athlete?
No, no
You ever heard of a company called "Yonesas"?
I borrowed it from the company I work in.
I had to get this since your other ball was barely inflated

Okay, that's it for today.
...
What's up with Tawada-san?
Why the jersey?
Really?!
Then you need to go home, right now.
Yeah.
Huh?
Did you not eat dinner?
Thank you very--
GRUM-BLE.
It's okay. I don't have a mom.
Aw, man.
I'm sorry if I upset your mom.

Yeah.
And my dad still shouldn't be back from work.
No mom.
Oh.
Really?
Was it divorce? Death?
Or...
He doesn't have a mother in his life?
He's...?
Wait...
is he denying her existence?
Satoko?

You've been avoiding me a lot lately, haven't you?

Oh.
Hey, wait.
I'm in a hurry
Oh.
Hey, Shiikawa-san. I got to leave.
*GRAB
STRETCH.

Like seriously, I am really sorry.
Oh, I am really sorry.

Then, ...what can I do to make you drink with me?
Well, I wouldn't know.
I don't drink much to begin with.

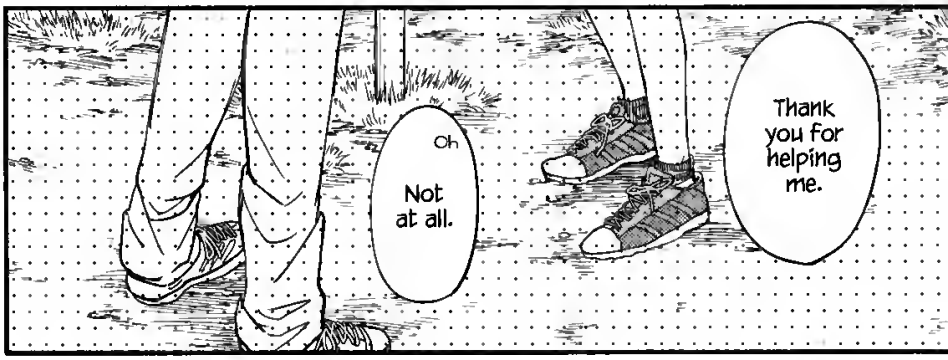
I think I've been paying enough attention to you.
Really? You could do a better job.
Well, I don't need to.

So, I don't see what's so important.
...we'd only talk about how much we hate our jobs.
Look, if I agreed to go drinking with you,
How about I make it important?

Are you free tomorrow?
Today is the last day I'm helping with Mashuu's practice.
525...
*BOOT
524...
*BOOT
523...
*BOOT
*MURMUR
Adjust my leg...
525 kicks!
That's awesome. At the rate you're going, you'll cinch the test for sure.
*SFX CLICK

Can all grade schoolers...
...make that kind of face?
He's in sixth grade... which makes him 18 years younger than me...
urk
*PANT
はっ
*PANT
はっ
Good job today.
This may be our last training session.
...but you still need to give it your all tomorrow.
...O--

It's so embarrassing to call myself an "Onee-san"...
But I don't have the guts to call myself an "Oba-san"
Onee-
-san will be cheering you on, okay?



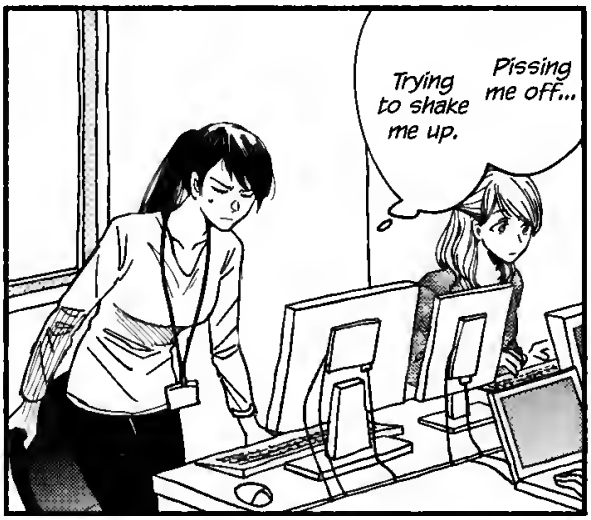

*BEEP
ピロピロ!!

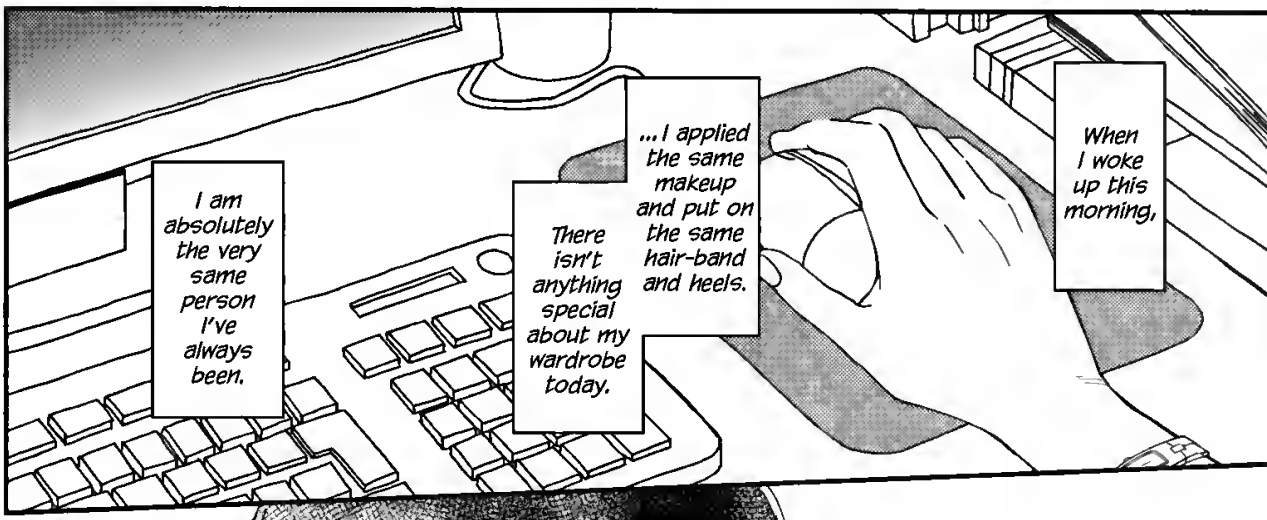
*BEEP
ピロピロ!!

*BEEP
ピロピロ!!

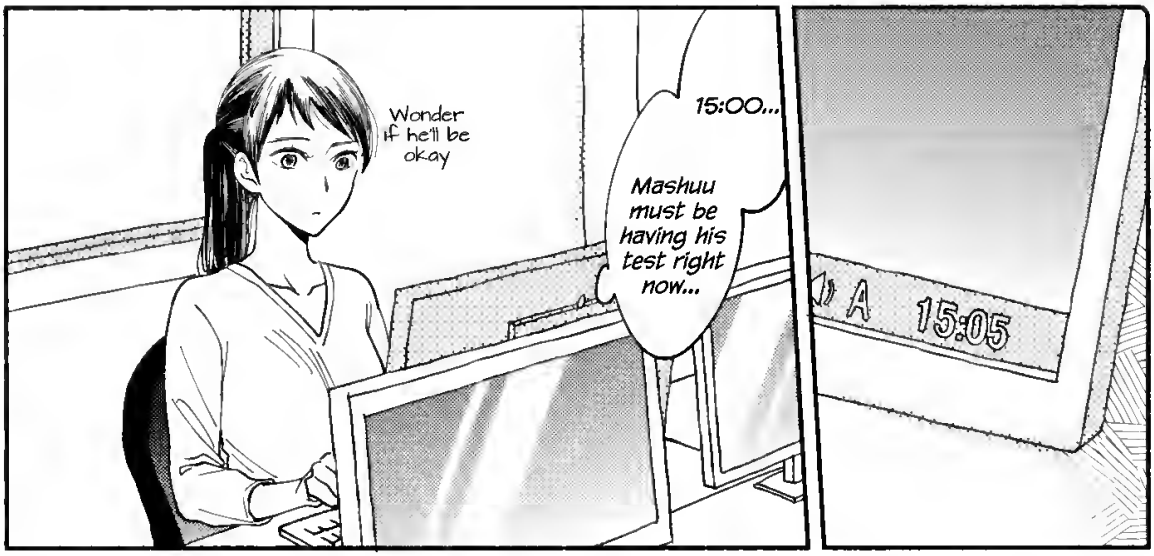
Yep
Since I don't need it today.
Huh?
You're not wearing a jersey today.
What...?
*STARE
...Nothing.
*SMILE
I was trying to see if there was something...
...unusual about you.
WHA?
*DA-BUMP
But, alas.
Just the same old you.

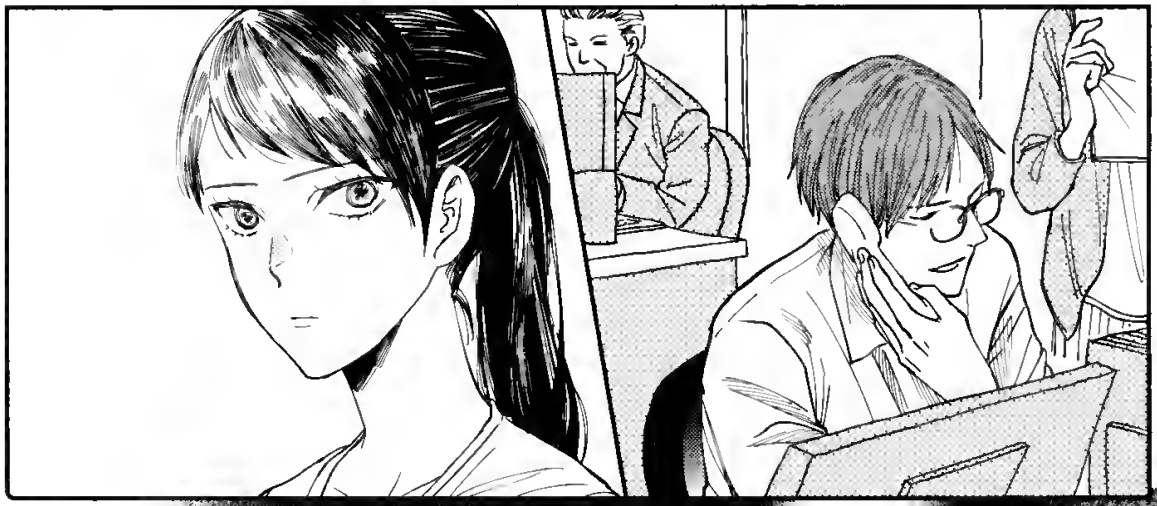
Hey, do you think I'm not myself today?
Huh?!
N-not really...?
I don't know
Good.


Pissing me off...
Trying to shake me up.


When I woke up this morning,
...I applied the same makeup and put on the same hair-band and heels.
There isn't anything special about my wardrobe today.
I am absolutely the very same person I've always been.

How about I make it important?
He's just playing with me.
I have nothing to look forward to.

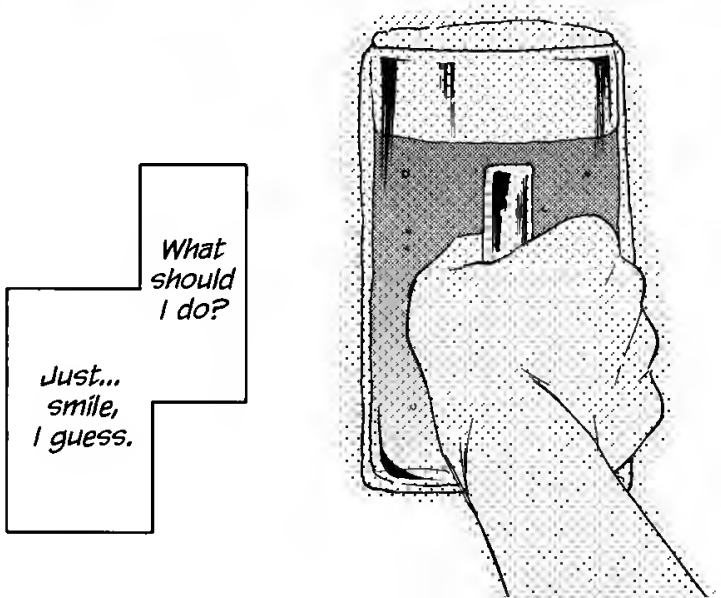

Wonder if he'll be okay
15:00...
Mashuu must be having his test right now...
A 15:05



IWAKIYA
Um...
Is there a room reserved for Shiikawa?
Yes, there is. I'll take you there.
Excuse me, you have company.
ガラララ
*SLIIIDE...

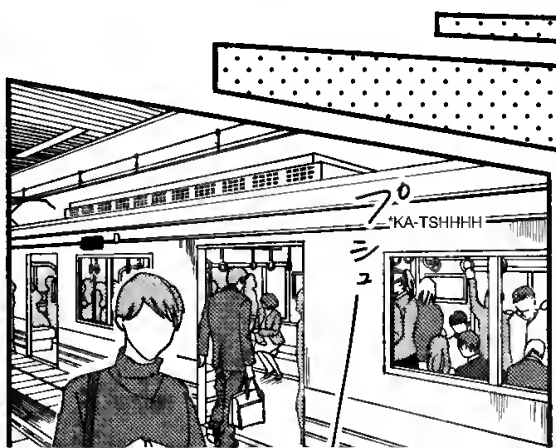
Oh, you're finally here.
What took you so long?

Oh.
Really?
Huh.
What's happening?
My eyes are shaking.
Uh...
Yeah, sorry I'm late.


What should I do?
Just... smile, I guess.
Umm.
All right, cheers.

Ugh, this is so fucked up...
I'm not doing a good job, am I?

*SFX: WOBBLE WOBBLE
My head hurts... My face hurts...
ふら
ふら


*KA-TSHHHH
シュ

Why do I...
...feel so empty?
Actually, no. Hell no. Not true.
...I was looking forward to seeing him?
...hypothetically speaking,
Well, what if...
*SFX DING DONG
ピンポーン
Huh?
Get your shit together, you dumb machine.
*TSK

Haha...
What the hell...
I didn't expect this.
IWAKIYA
Oh...
...that's a normal part of life.
To me,
...and do their best not to reveal their locked-away feelings to other people.
...So, they live life,
...there are still things they keep locked inside their hearts.
...people look happy on the outside,
Even if...
But maybe the truth is...
...they're happy on the inside.
There are people who complain incessantly.
...I'm wondering if that's really true.
But now,

*KOT
*KOT
*KOT
*KOT
As soon as I get home, I'm cleaning out my makeup...
...and going to bed. If only I was wearing a face mask. I'd just tear it right off...
...Ha-ha.
My apartment's a long walk.
What'd I come here for...?
*TURN
...
Just leave...

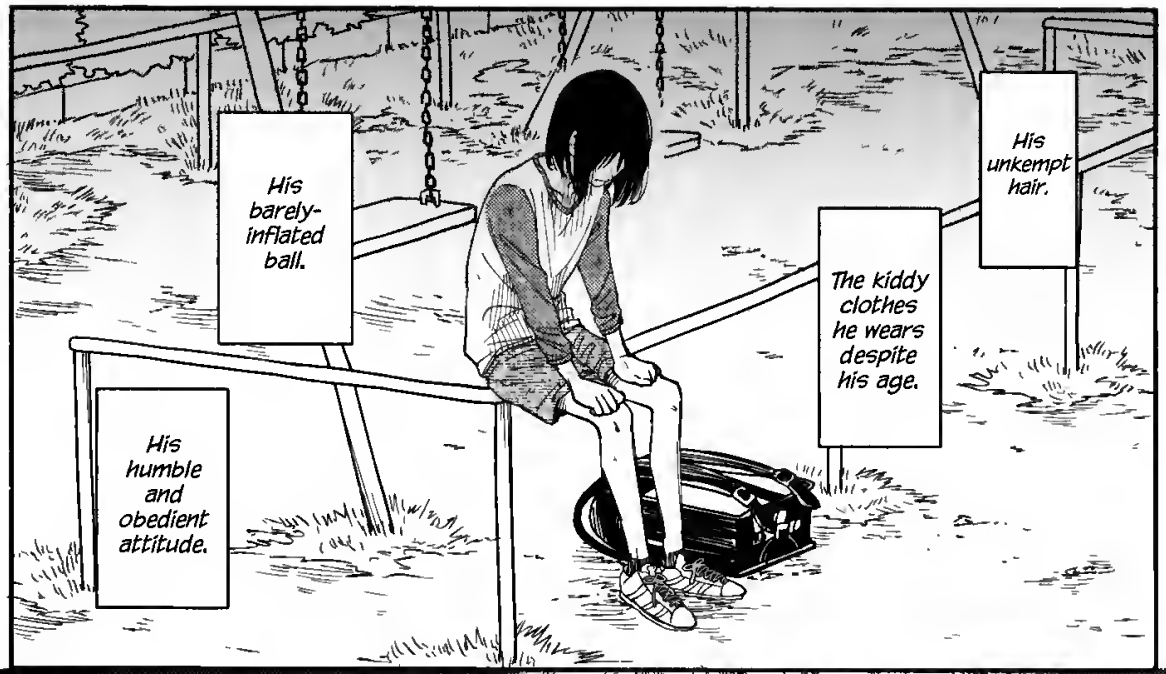
*TURN
ばっ

Hey
Didn't I tell you not to be here all by yourself?
*TMP
たっ
...I'm sorry.

Mashuu.
*FLINCH
ビク

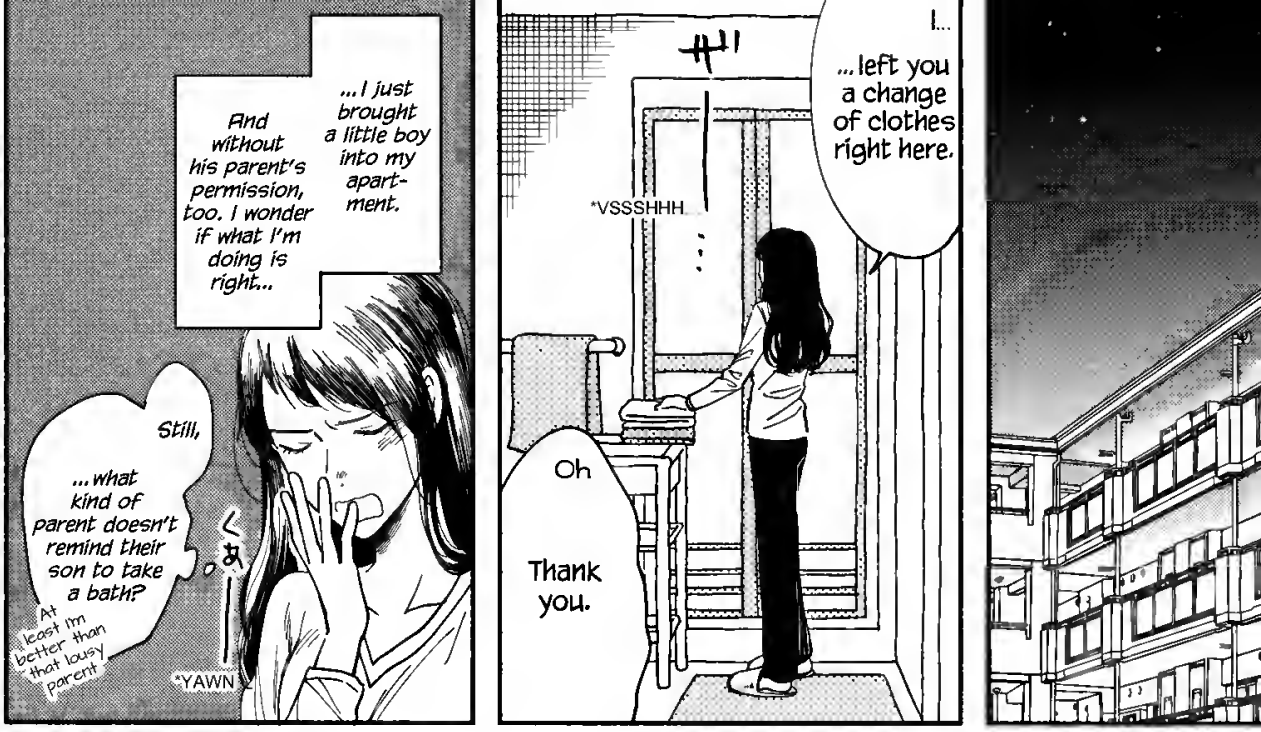
I was second-place in juggling.
But I made lots of mistakes in the intrasquad game.
...Is that so...
I couldn't make it...
...to the first string.
I have to quit.
You're only in sixth grade, so you just gotta keep practicing. And when you enter middle school...
...But this is still just the beginning for you.
So,
...I'm...
...quitting.
The thought of continuing soccer when it's meaningless just makes me feel empty inside.
I think it's best that I give up now since I was never cut out for it to begin with.
I couldn't become a front-liner when I'm in elementary school, so it's hard to imagine that I'll get better eventually.

It's okay. I don't have a mom.
Whenever I saw him, it'd always hit me.
I don't think they're worried.

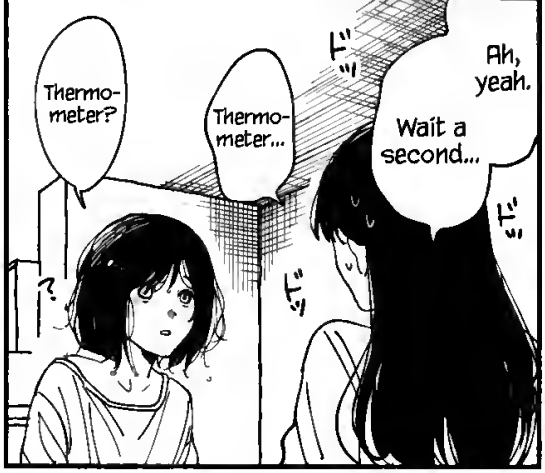

His barely-inflated ball.
His unkempt hair.
The kiddy clothes he wears despite his age.
His humble and obedient attitude.

...of his parent coming out of his mouth.
These are the words...

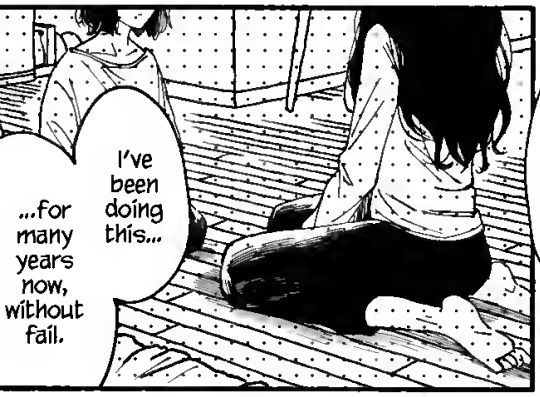
Huh?
Did you...
Hey, are you wearing the same clothes from yesterday?
*SHAK
...not take a bath today?
...Oh.
*BLUSH..
Let's go.
Huh?

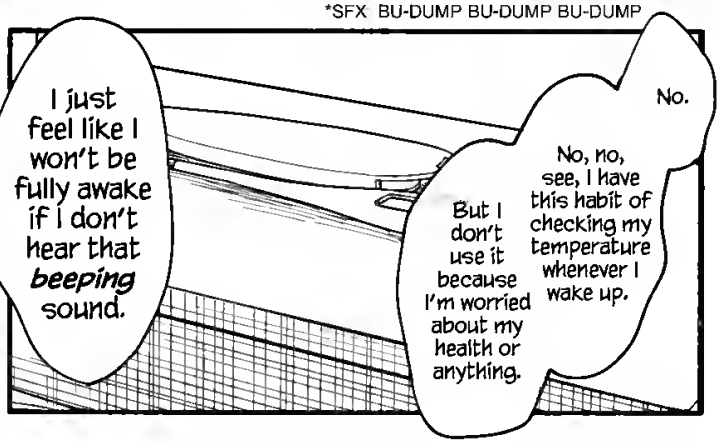

...I just brought a little boy into my apartment.
And without his parent's permission, too. I wonder if what I'm doing is right...
Still,
...what kind of parent doesn't remind their son to take a bath?
At least I'm better than that lousy parent
*YAWN
*VSSSHHH
I...
...left you a change of clothes right here.
Oh
Thank you.

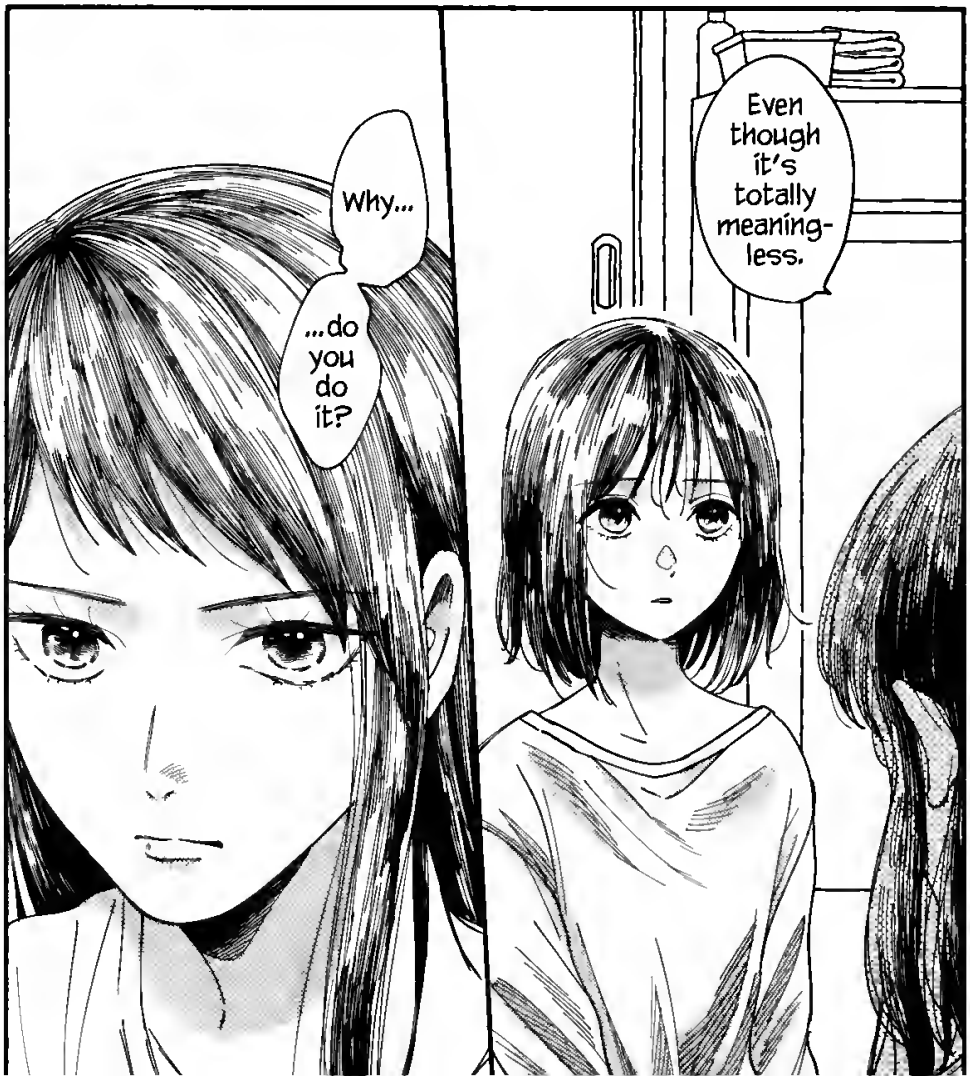
U-um...
Sorry.
Mmn...
*SFX: JUMP
!!!
!?
!?
I'm done with my bath.
Thank you very much.




*SFX BU-DUMP BU-DUMP BU-DUMP





I just feel like I won't be fully awake if I don't hear that *beeping* sound.
No.
No, no, see, I have this habit of checking my temperature whenever I wake up.
But I don't use it because I'm worried about my health or anything.



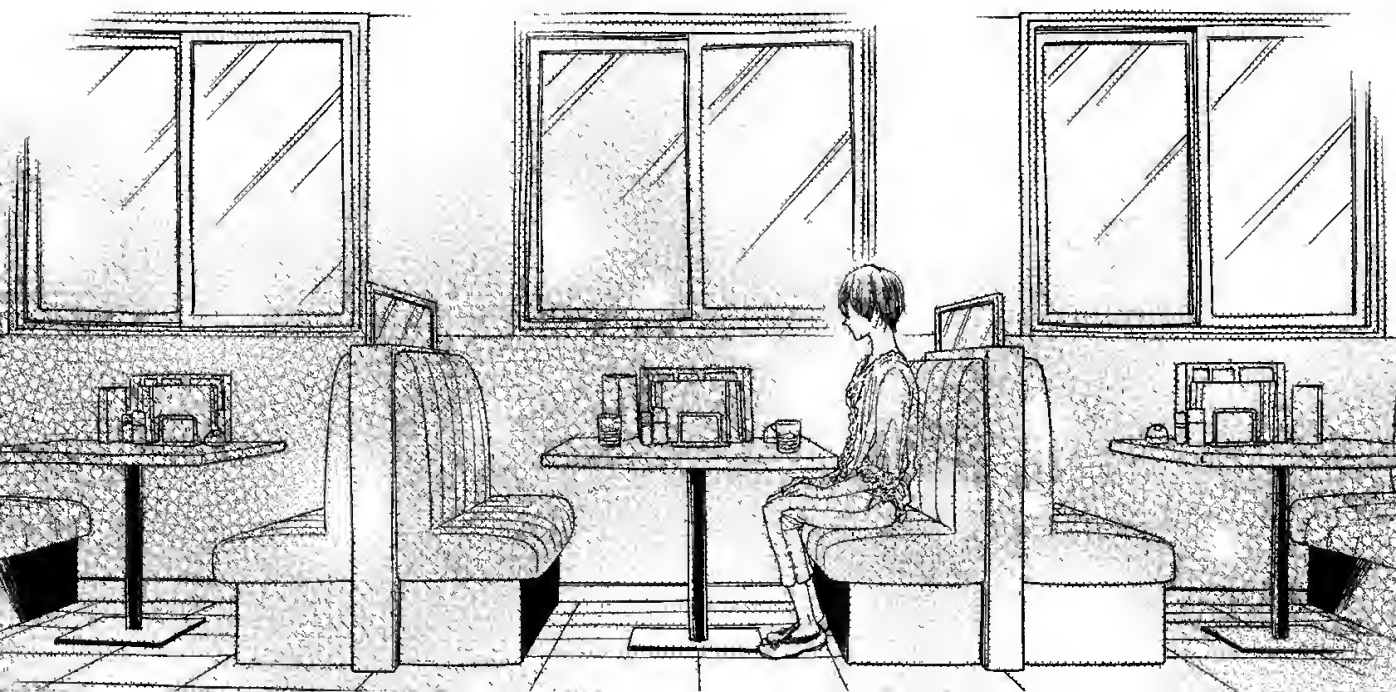
But I'll always remember how it all began.

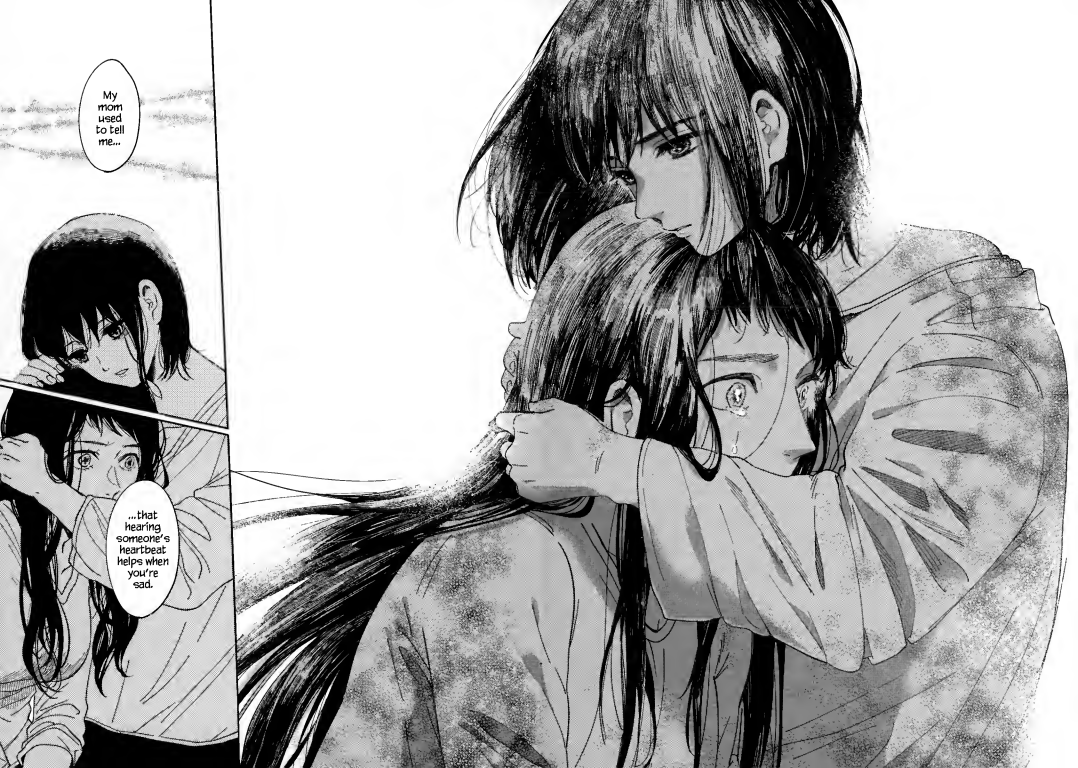
I was never serious about him. I don't regret breaking up with him.
And that's the truth.
Oh, no, no, um.
Sorry, I'm, uh, fine.
H-huh...? What...? Haha.

*But for the longest time,*

*...I've deluded myself into thinking that we lived life...*

*...the same way.*



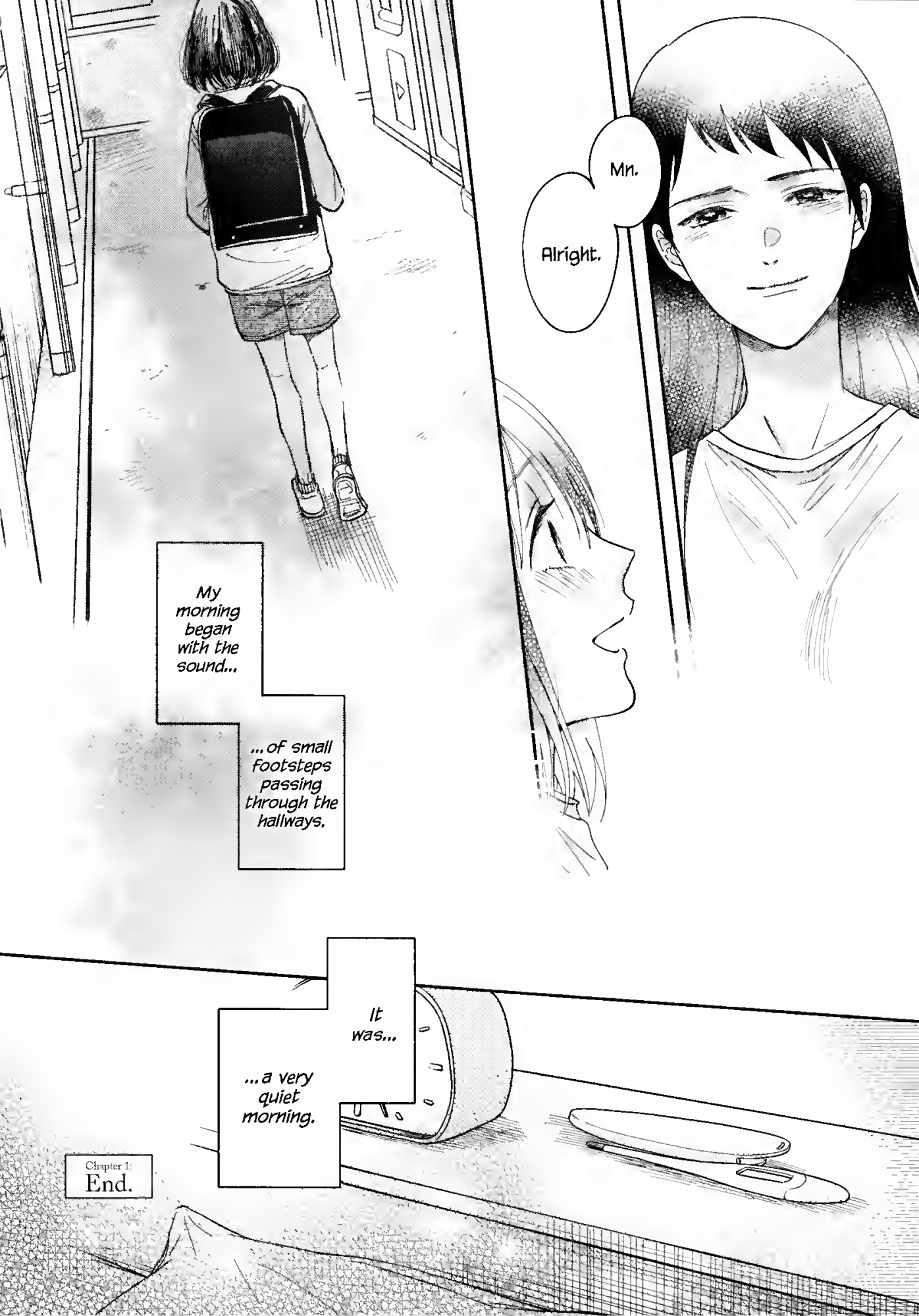

My mom used to tell me...
...that hearing someone's heartbeat helps when you're sad.

...There must've been...
...a lot of things that led you to start soccer.
But.
...you're the one who decides whether you want...
...to keep on doing it.
And if you want to stop,
...that's also up to you.

Mn.
Hic
I don't...
I don't...
...I...
I don't... Hic
...want to...
Hic

Mashuu...?

Oh,
...good morning.
MASHUU!
ガ
ヤ
*KER-CHAK
...Oh.
You're awake...
You're up early.
Yeah.
I was planning on leaving when you woke up.
ガ-SHAK
You're leaving now? What about food?
It's okay! Thanks for yesterday.
I want to practice soccer with you again.
Um...


Mn.
Alright.
My morning began with the sound...
...of small footsteps passing through the hallways.
It was...
...a very quiet morning.
Chapter 1:
End.

Translator:
GDAFF.

Proofreader:
Omega765, Anon.

Cleaner:
Anon.

Redrawer:
Anon.

Typesetter:
Anon.

Quality Control:
Omega765.